



ASTHMA, SWIMMING & THE BUTEYKO INSTITUTE METHOD OF BREATHING RECONDITIONING

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INTRODUCTION

The Buteyko Institute Method (BIM) of Breathing Reconditioning is known for its effectiveness at reducing asthma and the need for medication. It also provides significant benefits for enhancing sports performance. The method is learnt by attending a Buteyko workshop consisting of five sessions of 90 minutes within a one-week period.

BACKGROUND ON ASTHMA & THE BUTEYKO INSTITUTE METHOD

Asthma is receiving an increasing amount of exposure in the media. It is now estimated that over two million Australians suffer from it. In school-aged children, the incidence of asthma has doubled in the last 10 years and a now staggering 30% of school-aged children suffer from it. Around 800 people die from asthma each year in Australia.

The good news is that the Buteyko Institute Method of Breathing Reconditioning is achieving wonderful results in helping people reduce and eliminate asthma and the need for medication. In addition to its corrective properties for asthma and sinus problems, Buteyko also provides significant benefits for enhancing sports performance.

Professor Buteyko, from Russia, discovered and developed this method of breathing retraining in 1952 and it is only since the end of the Cold War that the method has spread to the western world. The theoretical basis of Buteyko is that people with asthma breathe incorrectly – they overbreathe. This has been established in several clinical trials.

RESEARCH ON THE BUTEYKO INSTITUTE METHOD

Several clinical trials on the Buteyko have occurred.

- Mater Hospital Brisbane 1994 (published in the MJA December 1998)
- Victoria University Melbourne 1999
- Gisborne Hospital New Zealand 2000
- Glasgow University Scotland in 2000-1

The pilot study at Glasgow University, which will shortly be followed by a major clinical trial over two years with 600 participants, showed the following results...

- 92% of those who learnt the Buteyko Institute Method were completely off their reliever medication within one week. The other 8% were defaulters.
- 40% showed improvement in compliance with asthma education and medication.
- After 12 weeks, 74% of those who learnt the Buteyko Institute Method, commenced the reduction program for steroid medication.
- Measurement of Quality of Life using SF36 Scale showed various degrees of improvement in all areas, with asthma being one of the major areas.

SWIMMING & OTHER PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Many people with asthma are encouraged to take up swimming. The humidity associated with swimming pools has the effect of not causing as much drying out of our airways if we breathe incorrectly, when compared to sports such as running or cycling. It is the overbreathing which then causes the body to develop asthma symptoms – bronchospasm, mucus production and inflammation. This then results in a drop in your performance and manifests further as fatigue, lactic acid build-up, illness, breakdowns, low stamina, slow injury repair, and side effects from medication usage. All of these things occur because of incorrect and inefficient breathing – and can be reduced and then eliminated by learning Buteyko.

HOW BUTEYKO CORRECTS BREATHING & IMPROVES PERFORMANCE

Buteyko is unique as a breathing tool as it recognises the critical importance of carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels to respiratory efficiency and optimum sports performance. It is dissolved CO₂ in the blood that induces the release of oxygen to the cells (Bohr Effect). A very large proportion of people, both when at rest and during exercise, have carbon dioxide levels lower than optimum. Low carbon dioxide levels are universal in asthmatics. Buteyko corrects the CO₂ levels allowing optimal oxygenation of body cells and tissues.

Benefits of Respiratory Efficiency/Correct O₂ and CO₂ balance...

- Speed – respiratory efficiency = greater speed for less effort
- Endurance
- Less lactic acid build up, cramping and leg fatigue

- No asthma symptoms

CO₂ is a potent bronchodilator and a determinant of cortisol production. No asthma symptoms results in less or no medication needed and therefore less side effects of medication.

Some side effects of asthma medications are...

- Cardiac stimulant effects of bronchodilators
- Ligament laxity, bruising and immune dysfunction effects of cortico steroids
- Health, immunity balance in O₂/CO₂ = better immune function, metabolism and oxygenation, rapid oxygen extraction
- Heart rate lower resting, training and performance heart rates faster heart rate recovery time
- Focus improved focus without shortness of breath, better oxygenation of brain
- Energy levels respiratory efficiency = full oxygenation = improved stamina, endurance and tissue repair
- Sleep quality – snoring and apnea cease, correct breathing means silent and quality rest

WHAT DOES LEARNING BUTEYKO INVOLVE?

Learning Buteyko involves breathing exercises and application of efficient breathing to all activities from rest (including sleep) through to intense exercise. It involves, for most, less breaths per minute, less litres of air per minute, correct use of the diaphragm, return of CO₂ levels to normal, post effort breathing recovery techniques, breathing techniques to achieve faster reduction of heart rate to rest level, more oxygen to the working cells.

Buteyko techniques are effective in unblocking acute and chronically blocked noses and in restoring nasal breathing. The Buteyko program for asthma sufferers follows National Asthma Campaign guidelines on medication – bronchodilators to be taken according to need – and preventative medications to be taken as prescribed by the doctor. The onset of asthma symptoms are avoided or controlled by applying the Buteyko Institute Method.

The Buteyko Institute Method is taught in five day workshops (90 minutes per day) by Practitioners accredited by the Buteyko Institute. People attending the workshops are offered a money-back guarantee if they do not experience significant improvement. The motto is ... *“you have nothing to lose except your asthma!”*

Paul O’Connell is a former asthma sufferer who learnt Buteyko for his own asthma in early 1994. He subsequently studied and trained with Alexander Stalmatski to become a Buteyko Practitioner, and is founding member and currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Buteyko Institute of Breathing and Health Inc. (BIBH). Since its formation in 1997, the institute now has over 50 members in 12 different countries around the world.

For further details and to receive a free information kit in the mail, please phone the Buteyko Institute on 1800 001 700.

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